Commissioner Steve Radack and his staff wish you a great Labor Day holiday. Labor Day celebrates the contributions of labor to our country and it dates to the late 1880s. It became an official National Holiday in 1894. The long weekend associated with this first Monday in September holiday is recognized as the unofficial end of summer. When the greatest generation and their boomer kids were attending school, school never started until after Labor Day.

The August 17 Senior History Bus Trip went to The Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History in Bryan, followed by lunch and a winery tour at Messina Hof.

The Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History is conveniently located adjacent to the convention center just off the Highway 6 Bypass. It houses displays primarily interpreting the natural history of the local area. It is a small, intimate museum and is a different experience than that of the larger Houston Museum of Natural Science. The Brazos Valley Museum features Pleistocene exhibits of the megafauna that roamed the area until the last ice age when the first humans entered North America. You can stand within a couple of feet of both a mastodon and mammoth skull.

It also devotes a good deal of space to the use of the Brazos bottoms for cotton production and documents several floods that occurred in the early 20th century. One of the items on display was a heavy skiff made from forged iron and cypress wood. It was built by a large plantation operator who had lost 13 of his tenant farmers in a 1913 flood. The boat, christened “Mary” after the plantation owner’s wife, was utilized in future floods to rescue tenant farmers trapped in their isolated
houses. While there were various types of “life boats” during the era, this is apparently the sole survivor. The exhibits also detail the cotton culture that made the Valley prosperous from the mid-1800s through today.

There is an exhibit area devoted to 19th century Texas and cowboy culture. It included several old rifles, an evolution of pistols, a collection of short swords, an antique chuck wagon and many other artifacts from the bygone era of cattle drives and wars, where glory was considered important.

The museum has a number of dinosaur fossil specimens, a couple of which are rather impressive. These specimens are from the Frithiof Fossil Collection and are displayed courtesy of Ron Frithiof and George Blasing’s Dinosaur World. The full head of a Triceratops is at ground level and you can look the fossil square in the eye. The tail of a Hadrosaur is also about chest high. Walking along its length provides a perspective not experienced at large museums with more comprehensive collections. There is also an Alaskan wolf and a grizzly bear that some seniors posed with for selfies. The museum has an exhibit of Goodbye to a River by John Graves which documented his trip down the Brazos River in 1957. The book is a conservation masterpiece and helped prevent a series of dams from destroying the river. The exhibit includes some of the photos Graves took while traveling the river.

After the museum, the seniors went to Messina Hof Winery where they enjoyed a leisurely lunch. The food was excellent and the service amazing, as the seniors ate lunch and paid their bills in an hour. That is surely a record for any place we have visited.
At left, the dining area also serves as an aging area for barrels of wine. At right, a delightful lunch. Photos by Jim Pulliam.

Following lunch, the seniors went into the vineyard and saw and tasted grapes from the vine, followed the harvested grapes into the juicing area, and then followed the path of the grape juice to the ferment vats. Finally, they went into the storage area that holds the wine to age in barrels. They learned how the barrels are used to modify the taste and color of the wine.

At left, the seniors tour the vineyards and sample the grapes. Note the red wine fermenting vats in the background. At right, the grape processing area is explained. Photos by Jim Pulliam.
Following the tour, the seniors went to a room to taste various wines produced at the winery and learned a few techniques to allow the wine to be fully tasted by one's taste buds and palate. It was most educational for any wine drinker. The seniors took home a souvenir Messina Hof wine glass to commemorate the day.

Signing Up for Senior History Bus Trips (Must be at least 50 years old to go on these trips)

There is now a waitlist for the September 21 trip to tour old Victoria and to visit the Victoria County Courthouse. You may now sign up for the October 26 trip to New Braunfels to tour the Comal County Courthouse and Gruene Historic District, the November 16 trip to the Sam Houston Home and Museum in Huntsville and the Fanthorp Inn in Anderson, and the December 14 trip is still being planned and details are not available by the newsletter deadline. Sign up for future trips by emailing cypressstop@pct3.com or calling (281) 357-5324. You may only sign up yourself plus one friend/spouse. No multiple reservations. You will get a confirmation e-mail a week before the trip if you have a seat.
Cypress Top Historic Park is open seven days a week from dawn to dusk. The buildings are now open Tuesdays through Thursdays from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. Formal tours of the museum complex led by CHS volunteers begin from Juergen’s Store at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. each Tuesday. However, we are happy to have you visit the store anytime while we are there to give you an impromptu tour of any of the buildings. **Group (6 or more) tours may be booked Tuesdays through Saturdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.** Group tours are subject to staff availability, so we recommend you make reservations at least one month in advance. The park and museum buildings are open to all and, as with all events offered at Cypress Top Historic Park, **admissions and tours are free.**

Juergen’s Hall is a community center. It offers many activities and classes for all ages. Please check the Precinct Three website at [www.pct3.com](http://www.pct3.com) for hours of operation and offerings of Juergen’s Hall Community Center.

Members of the Cypress Historical Society are in the Cypress Train Depot (bright yellow building) at Cypress Top Historic Park every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and also on the third Saturday of the month from noon to 3 p.m. They have a great deal of genealogy information on most early Cypress area families. Drop in and visit them when you are in the area.

The September and October calendars can be found on the Precinct 3 web site: [www.pct3.com](http://www.pct3.com). There is a link from the park web page as well.

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**COMMISSIONER STEVE RADACK INVITES YOU TO THE 11TH ANNUAL KLEB WOODS HUMMINGBIRD FESTIVAL**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2018**

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**HUMMINGBIRD BANDING:**

Sumita Prasad will be capturing and banding hummingbirds throughout the day. She will be assisted by Jim Renfro: both are licensed hummingbird banders. In addition to seeing these feathered jewels up close, you will learn about their unique structure and amazing biology.

**NATURE WALKS**

**KIDS ACTIVITIES**

Featuring as many as 100 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds!

**RAPTORS:**

Houston Audubon Society Education Director Mary Anne Weber will display several live raptors to be photographed in a natural setting. She will field questions and show her raptors throughout the day.

**NATURE TALK:**

Staff naturalist Kendra Kocab will present A Closer Look at Nature. This class is part of an ongoing series designed to give school-aged children a closer look at our natural world. Today’s 20 minute presentation: Hummingbird Biology at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

**HISTORY TALK:**

Klek Woods staff will introduce visitors to A Closer Look at History. This series is designed for school-aged children. Each class investigates a historical topic. Today’s 20 minute presentation: The Story of Elmer Kleb & His Woods at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

**WHAT:**

Everything you want to know about hummingbirds — including identifying, attracting and gardening for hummingbirds. There will be games and activities for the whole family. There will be nature walks throughout the day. The Kleb House will be open for tours and the blacksmiths will be demonstrating in the barn.

**WHERE:**

Klek Woods Nature Center, 2000 Draper Rd. at Mueschke Rd., Tomball 77377

http://www.pct3.com/parks/kleb Woods /

Saturday, September 8 from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**Admission is free. Patrons are encouraged to bring their own refreshments. Drinks and snacks will not be sold.**

For additional information, call Kleb Woods Nature Center at (281) 357-5224.